



VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION CENTER FACT SHEET 01-14

Introduction

Originally established to administer the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) program, the role of the Health Administration Center (HAC) has been expanded to include administration of the Department's Foreign Medical Program, Spina Bifida Healthcare Program and VHA's Mail Management Office. Beginning in the fall of 2001, the HAC will administer the Department's Children of Women Vietnam Veterans. Additionally, the Center employs an EDI Project Office that is actively engaged in the development of electronic commerce applications for health care claims processing.

History

In June 1986, the VA assumed management of the CHAMPVA Program at what was then called, the CHAMPVA Center in Denver, Colorado. From FY 1973 through FY 1986, VA Medical Centers were responsible for processing CHAMPVA applications and determining if applicants were eligible for the program.

Initially, the CHAMPVA Center was responsible only for beneficiary eligibility determinations. In 1990, the Center began to assume responsibility for all aspects of the program from the Department of Defense (DoD). Prior to 1990, DoD's Office of Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services (OCHAMPUS) was responsible for processing all CHAMPVA claims. By January 1, 1994, the Center was fully responsible for performing all CHAMPVA program administrative functions, including claims processing, beneficiary eligibility determinations and payments for beneficiaries residing in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. For this effort, the Center was honored with a National Performance Review Hammer Award in 1995. The transition was complete January 1, 1996, when the Center assumed responsibility for all foreign CHAMPVA claims processing and payments.

With the implementation of numerous program initiatives between 1990 and 1996, the role of the CHAMPVA Center continued to expand.

In 1994 the Center assumed responsibility for the VA's Foreign Medical Program. Under this program, the Center pays for health services required for veterans with service-connected disabilities who live or travel overseas.

In 1996, the Center was selected to process claims for family member of Persian Gulf veterans who needed a physical examination.

The Center expanded the CHAMPVA Program through two major initiatives in 1992 and 1995. The CHAMPVA In House Treatment Initiative (CITI) and a mail-order pharmacy program provided improved access to care and decreased costs to the beneficiary and to the government. The mail order pharmacy program, called Meds by Mail, received a VA Scissors Award in 2000 for excellence and innovation.

In 1996, the CHAMPVA Center was officially renamed the Health Administration Center (HAC).

The Center became the home of the Spina Bifida Healthcare Program in 1997. Under this program, children of Vietnam veterans with spina bifida are provided a full range of health care services.

Because of its success with the Spina Bifida Healthcare Program, the Center has been selected as the organization that will administer benefits under the new Children of Women Vietnam Veterans, a benefit program being developed for implementation in late 2001.

In 1997-1998, the Center and VISN 19 partnered in a centralized claims processing demonstration for the VA's Fee program. This pilot provided tremendous information that has been of use to the VA in other areas of claims management.

The Center is the only Federal health benefits program directly involved in claims processing (Medicare and TRICARE both utilize commercial claims processors). Through the use of imaging technology and EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) applications, the HAC has developed a state-of-the-art claims processing system that is among the most advanced in the industry.

The Center became a field station of the Chief Financial Office, Veterans Health Affairs (VHA) Headquarters. The Center Directors have included: Charles DeCoste, 1989-1996, Michael Hartford, 1997-1999, Mary Beth Saldin (Acting) 1999-2000, and Ralph Charlip, the incumbent.